

- * Thought for the day, your enthusiasm, that you take responsibility for “things gone wrong”, and your desire to lead. (Support Staff)
- * I want to let you know I appreciate all you do for this district. This is my third year at Holmes Jr. High and I have never felt more informed and involved in the district than I do this year. I know you are the reason. It is so important to know what is happening in other Cedar Falls schools. When I arrived, we had to work really hard to align the Science curriculum among the secondary schools. We also were told to align with the elementary schools as well. This district is so large, that the task is still coming together. Communication from you about the district has played a key role in working towards alignment. We as teachers put a lot of focus into our own classrooms and therefore don’t always know what is happening outside “the bubble” of our own classroom. (Teacher)
- * Regular communication. I enjoy the “thought of the day” emails, and appreciate knowing what is going on in the district. I appreciate that you take the time to fill us all in on what’s happening. Being proactive and starting right away with your goals of the new high school and bilingual education. Taking time to speak to me, and remembering me later; no small feat in a district this big! (Teacher)
- * Great communication, take responsibility for situations, you are approachable and humble, not afraid to apologize, and share Superintendent Update. (Support Staff)
- * I feel you are a real ambassador for the Cedar Falls School District. You are passionate about the possibilities of what CF schools can do for their students and for the community. You think outside the “traditional” box – ideas about developing programs that help children develop a trade, partnering with the community on sharing resources, promoting our schools in having students learn a second language. Communication has increased tremendously in the district. I feel more informed about what is happening in the district through staff updates, executive cabinet notes, etc. This helps me perform my job better and even gives me an opportunity to ask questions and/or give ideas. One of the most important overall traits is your integrity. You are open and honest in your dealings with people. You treat people with respect no matter what their status in life. This is especially evident in the daily interactions with welcoming new students and their parents when they come to enroll in the district. You are a great listener and even though a person’s opinion may differ from yours, I feel you are very open-minded. Your actions are also proof of that. You take time for people and you are not afraid to express sincere appreciation for people’s contributions. You have a very “service-oriented” philosophy. This is evident not only in the things that you do in your work, but your outside activities as well. I see your “service” as building relationships with those that you work with and the community at large. (Support Staff)
- * Staff Updates: I appreciate knowing a little about what is taking place across the district. Classroom visits: I enjoy having you stop in and sitting in on my classes. It really validates what we do. Thought for the Day: I may not always have time to devote to the reflection questions, but I do enjoy reading and thinking about the quote. I wouldn’t stop sending them – some people just like to complain. I also greatly appreciate your support for the arts. We tend to get overlooked at times. (Teacher)
- * First and foremost, your communication with us and your presence at school events has been outstanding. I really appreciate that you value the job that we do as educators. This is apparent in the way that you conduct business. The weekly (bi-weekly) staff updates are great for keeping us in the loop. The open invitation for us to contact you with question, concerns, etc. is very welcome. You make an effort to be at a variety of types of school events – academics, musical, athletic, etc. Second of all, you are a forward-thinker and a go-getter. You are not content to let us continue operating our system the way we do just because it’s the way we’ve always done it. Examples include the new high school proposal, the possibility of one-to-one technology, bus route adjustments (the option for a hard-surface only route), and support of the PLC process and potential changes to the daily schedule for next year at the secondary buildings. You value thoughtful input from others (students, teachers, community members, etc.) with regards to these decisions. At the same time, we also have the ability to continue to do the things that we are doing well and that have proven successful. (Teacher)
- * I have to tell you; sometimes your thought of the day just really strikes the nail on the head, so to speak. How did you get the way you are? I understand you probably don’t have time to sit down and answer this, nor would I expect you to, but I bet you have a very interesting and great story. There is just something about you that is different. (Teacher)
- * Making decisions and bringing change. (Teacher)
- * I like your quotes of the day! I appreciate your passion for wanting to move the district along – it’s refreshing! Please include all of us! Keep visiting our buildings – teachers love to see you! (Administrator)

- * I have appreciated the communication on decisions made within the district (snow days, calendar, meetings, etc.). I have heard more from you in the past year than I have from any other superintendent in their entire time in the district. It is nice to understand the reasoning behind the decisions made within the district. I also appreciate your approachability. I have heard you state several times that you are willing to meet with anyone over their concerns. Your willingness to receive feedback and reflect over decisions that have been made is a strength that our district needs. (Teacher)
- * You have worked intensively to get to know administrators, teachers, parents and the community. I have heard positive comments concerning your friendliness to all. You have been very "matter of fact" in approaching concerns/dilemmas. I have heard you say, multiple times in Administrative Team and during SAC, "go ahead and be honest and say what you feel – there will be no hard feelings". That helps people to "open up" and be honest as well. Thank you (Administrator)
- * I have appreciated the push towards improving as a district, and not resting on our past successes. This includes thinking outside the box in many ways. You have worked to meet and develop relationships with business and community leaders, and looking for opportunities where we can develop partnerships. You continue to put a positive spin on most issues. You have been forced to face some unique situations during your first year in the district, i.e. fallout from Price Lab closing, potential new high school, prepping for a state visit, etc. You have been willing to address these issues head-on. (Administrator)
- * I enjoyed speaking with you the couple of times I did. You were interested in my role at the school and appeared interested in my schooling. You offered to be a reference which I thought was extremely generous of you! I liked that you put the safety of the kids and staff first. You understood that some of us drive to get to the schools and you canceled when necessary. In addition, you agree that if you're contagious or sick you should stay at home and not endanger yourself or others around you. That is nice because it's not fun watching very sick people at work come just because they feel forced too. I heard you were going to other schools to research/get to know some effective things they were doing. I think that is really neat and enjoy hearing things like that. I like open minded bosses. I also have noticed that you admit when you're wrong, which is a strength. Even if you weren't directly involved you still understand that you could have done something different. I don't hear of too many bosses do that. (Support Staff)
- * Sometimes you can have a bigger impact than you know. You may not always know faces and have names to put with them. You can't know all the ins and outs, or every tradition. You can't be in every building every day. You can only be you and try to be the very best person you know how to be. Some may not always appreciate it or might have a different perspective of what that should look like but as long as you put your heart into it people will be able to feel your true desires. Many days I sit in my room and get your thought for the day. It gets me thinking and reflecting. There is just something really warm about you that inspires me. It started off with a friendly hello and a listening ear. Then your strong tie to your faith sparked a little flame within me. You stand up for the little guy when you know their actions are to protect and help humanity grow. You are not too proud to admit mistakes instead you endure the growing. You are not the kind of person that would throw another under the bus just to benefit yourself. I really admire that about you. I am very honored to be working under you and you remind me of the reason I became a teacher. Just as the lessons you pass through words and your actions, I hope to pass onto my kids. The compassion you have within is a rare treasure my friend. (Teacher)
- * You had me the first day when you placed God's blessings on the school year. Your straight forward, no nonsense approach to leadership was and is very appealing to me. I like the amount of communication we get from you and I like how personal it is. You don't seem to draw the line between teachers and administrators like it has been drawn in this district in the past. You are not afraid to state your opinion. I think you have been left with a big job, but I do feel you have a good handle on what has happened in this district over the past 10 to 15 years. You have a plan to take CF to a better place. I will pray that as a district and a community we can make it happen. It is obvious that you are a caring, Christian person that wants to do what's right for all staff and kids. I like that and I thank you for that. (Teacher)

What have I done that you do not like? (Stop doing)

- * You work too much and need to spend more time with your family. I know it's not my place to say, but your kids and wife need you as much as we do. (Support Staff)
- * Maybe we could have the "Thought for the week" instead of the "Thought for the day". (Teacher)
- * Please stop spamming our email IN BOX. Hearing from you on important updates or things that generally matter are great, as I do feel more involved with the process of the new high school building or developments at meetings that you attend, site visits, etc. The thoughts of the day are not a worthwhile use of your time or ours. I understand the merit behind trying something like that, and several of them are good things to keep in mind, but the everyday stuff is annoying and our school day is already strapped with more things than we can possibly get done, so having to read an email to see if it's actually going to impact my current day isn't a worthwhile use of my time or your time in sending them out. If you generally want feedback with your thought of the day, then that's fine, but several people that I know who have responded received generic answers to their emails that didn't merit sending them in the first place. Far too many teachers just set your emails up as immediate SPAM because they don't want to waste time sifting through, which I doubt was your intent when you began sending them. We want to know you're out working for our district, not combing through the web to find the next thought or quote. Stop pushing the length of the school day without compensation. At the elementary level some schools with principal's who are either too lazy at their job or too fearful of the recompense have already started allowing kids to come into teacher's rooms almost immediately after the teachers' contract day begins. Teacher prep time as been cut razor thin, yet the demands for what they need to accomplish goes up. The phrase, "diminishing returns" should mean something to you. If you feel like more needs to be done, yet aren't willing to provide compensation, and then just wait if you continue pushing these things through. Certainly some will do as they are told to stay off the radar, but that won't change the teachers who already go above and beyond and are now asked to go further. Every person has their breaking point, and you're starting to find out that you've pushed far too many too far and it's about to push us behind, not further ahead. You can only use slogans like, "it's what's best for the kids" and "if you're the type of first rate professionals I know you are" for so long before they begin losing their effect. (Teacher)
- * NA (Support Staff)
- * Can't think of anything, everything I've seen so far is positive. If you make a mistake or see that something needs fixed you don't cover it up, you own it. Thank you! The "little people" of the staff want to feel valued also! (Support Staff)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * I have racked my brain with things to improve on because I think someone can always improve but I am struggling to come up with ideas that are directly you. Here is all I can come up with. The staff I work with is WONDERFUL. Some of the best people I have ever known and I think I can say probably 99% of us are here to truly do great things for our kids. There have been a lot of struggles with our building principal. I have thought about coming to you many, many, many times but I feel that would only make me a bigger target. I have always told my kids if you are going to complain to me about something then make sure you have an idea in your head of how to fix it before you come to me. I just don't know how to fix this one without fearing the loss of my job. Something you could do, keep close tabs on my building principal. Please don't share this because I am sure he would figure out who this is and I would lose my job. (Teacher)
- * NA
- * Less prep time next year. Adding programs (foreign language) before critical needs are met (i.e. technology (iPads, techs), AC/heat, 15 minutes, two times a cycle, not worth it for language. Ninety-minute late starts on bad weather days next year, not enough time. Why do we always go by high school? Some of us have to leave early, two hours fives time on bad days. (Teacher)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * Nothing so far – except I understand having the secondary finish before the Christmas break, but I don't love the calendar. I envision many early outs for heat. I feel we need two snow days built in. That being

said, I know SAC really felt listened to about the calendar and I appreciate how you listen to your staff. (Teacher)

- * I am weary that we will be putting out to the community that we are adding 15 minutes to the school day, and they have that pulled out from under us. I know that this is a real timing issue with CFEA, and we need to move forward with scheduling prior to a settlement being reached with CFEA. I believe it is the right thing to do, and I will be supportive, but I think we lose credibility if we move forward now, and have to backpedal to this later. I am also hearing from staff members that they are feeling stretched and stressed with all of the initiatives. We are looking at building school(s), changing curriculum, CSA's, and CFA's, grading practices, extending the teacher time with kids, 8-period day/intervention time, Leader in Me, etc. We have a lot of different areas to focus on when PLC's are a priority. (Administrator)
- * Too many balls in the air at once. Following one person's vision and developing a "shared" vision. You can't do it all alone – it is necessary to build organizational capacity in a district this size. (Administrator)
- * Honestly nothing that I am aware of. Every decision you make seems well thought out and explained to us. (Teacher)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * Like everything so far. (Teacher)
- * You had mentioned that you would be in the buildings more. We have not seen as much of that. I know our district is big, but stop in and see the work we are doing. (Teacher)
- * I personally can't handle the thought for the day every day. My mailbox is filled with parent communications, staff updates, announcements and more. I don't have time to read the thoughts so I delete them. I am maybe missing some good things so once a week would be better if you really want to connect with busy staff. (Teacher)
- * NA (Support Staff)
- * Not considered moving 9th grade to high school, even as their own private wing. This would eliminate the need for other schools being remodeled. Not waiting one more year for bilingual education so we can get our science and social studies standards figured out. (Teacher)
- * Be careful not to work on so many new initiatives that you end up scaring people and the Board about change. Unfortunately, we have been a District that has been very slow to act. It's good to push for some of these things but I don't believe they will be able to swallow too much change at once. If you push for a lot, you may scare the Board into no action. Pick out your two or three main things and get those done first. Once they see the positives from those you will be able to sell the rest later.
- * I often do not have time to read the daily email messages. (Teacher)
- * None (Teacher)
- * This is a very small detail, but some days I don't make time to really think about "The Thought of the Day". Weekly emails might be a better setup. Just an idea ☺ (Teacher)
- * NA (Support Staff)
- * NA (Support Staff)
- * Changing the start time for next year and giving teachers less planning in the morning and after school. Reflections of the day – I like the idea because it makes me stop and think, but it is hard to find time and read them. Maybe once a week would be plenty. (Teacher)
- * Sometimes your effort at humor is a little off. I have thought that it could be taken in a negative way especially when it comes to poking a little fun at someone else. I would hate to see you shoot yourself in the foot because a comment intended for a joke was taken too personal by someone. (Support Staff)
- * It has all been good! (Support Staff)
- * I was a little surprised by the decision to have the High School Choir Concert on a snow day. That's highly unusual. (Support Staff)
- * In time there will be a disagreement in a decision, especially when there is a change in leadership. I have seen only positive and encouraging actions on our part together. If there is a disagreement in the future, I feel encouraged and optimistic that it would be handled without favoritism and the whole picture would be looked at.
- * I think that you want to do too much too soon. You want to push ahead language in the elementary grades when the teachers first need to see what this means. Your interest in building a new high school is commendable, but do not expect all teachers to be on board with this. You have many good ideas but they seem overwhelming. The thought for the day just clutter the email box. (Teacher)

- * I do not like the 90-minute delay; two hour delay may give us more time to be ready for school so we don't have to cancel. ☺ (Teacher)
- * Not using administrative team in the decision making process, fast is okay at times, but sometimes we need to plan and discuss a little more. We have been too slow in the past on some decisions, but some we need to process as a group. Too many irons in the fire, need a couple of focus areas or at least updating us on things before they happen, don't be afraid to trust us with confidential items. (Administrator)
- * NA (Support Staff)
- * Nothing so far (Support Staff)
- * NA (Support Staff)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * We are spending/potentially spending A LOT of money and large amounts of it will fall on the shoulders of taxpayers. With all due respect, do you plan to reside in Cedar Falls for the next 20 years to pay those tax increases? World language and technology have a large dollar mount earmarked to them. In my opinion, we need to wait on world language and put our money into technology implementation. Something I've always been confident in is our district's financial standing and I fear you are spending A LOT of money that someday we'll wish we hadn't spent so irrationally (i.e. world language, new school(s). We've even recently proposed an \$8-10 million school bond sale. We've been a financially sound district for as long as I can remember – we need to be careful about how much we're spending. (Teacher)
- * The reflection part of the thought for the day. I enjoy the thought, but not being told what to do with it. As an adult, I am able to ponder the message on my own. As many others have commented, I no longer read the thought. You are too dictator-like. While you profess to have meetings to listen to all sides of the situation, you don't actually listen. You have your opinions and don't really consider the experts' view. Experts are those who have been in their position for many years, whether they are teachers (elementary or class-specific; secondary), paraeducators, or custodians. The appearance that you have come to Cedar Falls to get things done and crossed off your bucket list without thoroughly thinking everything through. You seem to be in a big hurry to make changes. CF jumps on the band wagon too quickly – when there's money available for a project, CF spends it without an in-depth investigation to see the long-term consequences. "We have to do this" plans: 8 classes/day (consideration for fair teacher pay for those teaching "extra" classes), one-to-one technology (how repairs, updates, etc. will be conducted when the techs aren't able to keep our computers/printers/projectors running properly now), bilingual education in the elementary schools (what you are suggesting is not bilingual education – again, not enough research done, so you come across as not being informed), Chinese exchange (the timeline has definitely changed on that since further research was done.) And those which are not meeting expectations or were in place 3 or 4 years: Infinite Campus (which has been in use 4 or 5 years already and is still a thorn in many teachers' sides), DEAR (no longer in place – lasted 3 years maybe?) teacher portfolios (does anyone update them anymore? do administrators look at them anymore?), to name a few. When a new superintendent was hired, we hoped for someone who would take his time making decisions before implementing new procedures; I don't believe we've found the right person yet. (Support Staff)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * I don't want to sound like a kiss-up, but I really can't think of anything. (Teacher)
- * Like the "Thought of the Day", but it is overwhelming – good idea – just maybe having one theme/week and one question/day regarding that theme. (Support Staff)
- * You make time for everyone and listen to their concerns. This is a real strength, but I know this can put strains on your time as well. (Support Staff)
- * Can't think of anything for this one. (Teacher)
- * I think you are going to catch a log of flack from long-time teachers for the number of big changes you are pushing for. Speaking as a relatively young teacher (7 years experience), please don't let this stop you from proposing new ideas to improve the district. That said, my only suggestions for changes are very minor. 1) The daily emails are a bit much. Nice thoughts, but they get to the point where they clog up my email and I don't read them. (But regular communication is GOOD as previously stated!) 2) A number of us noticed that we didn't see you at our district-wide PD day at the high school in September. I'm sure you were involved with some other important activity that prevented you from being there, but we were surprised that you weren't there and that we never heard why not. 3) I've seen you in my school building a time or two during the school day, but not as much as I'd hoped from your remarks at the beginning of the school year. I know you have a very large job to do with many tasks on your plate, but it would be wonderful if

you were able to get into the school buildings a little more often. (Or maybe I just don't happen to see you when you're here!) In my previous school district, which was medium-sized 2A/3A school, our superintendent took a few hours on Friday every single week to come visit every classroom in every building (5 buildings, 100 kids per grade). And he knew the name of every single teacher in the district. I was always impressed by that! That's certainly a lot tougher in a district our size, but what if you were able to visit all the classrooms in half the buildings one Friday and the other half the next Friday? Or a third and a third and a third? (Teacher)

- * NA (Teacher)
- * Too much, too fast, focus on one thing, bilingual education can wait. (Teacher)
- * It is difficult when you cancel/change meetings with us because often we have cleared the calendar or changed meetings to accommodate yours. I know some cannot be helped, but it is frustrating. It sends the message that "you are not as important as other things" even though I know it is not your intent. (Administrator)
- * I think you have done a fantastic job. You are SO visible. I have already seen you at more school activities in one year than the previous superintendent in all his years at CF. It shows you care. I also love your vision for the future, including the potential for a new high school and the hope that the 9th graders will be at the high school. (Teacher)
- * You have been open and honest. You clearly state your thoughts and opinions on the many issues our district is facing. You communicate with the staff at many levels and we are given many opportunities to share our thoughts and opinions about the issues our district is facing. Your honesty has built trust as we know what the agenda is, there are no surprises. (Teacher)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * I can't think of anything. (Teacher)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * NA (Administrator)
- * I have visited with you before on this...Involvement and communication with Cabinet and Administrative Council is critical in a larger district. Many of the priorities you have set have not become part of a shared vision. This has resulted in confusion, and in some ways, resentment of what is perceived as your vision, and not our vision. We have worked over the past few years to set some priorities for our district and buildings to enhance student achievement and professional development. The PLC work has become a major focus, and we have worked to limit the initiatives that administrators and teachers are to be implementing. You have focused on some new, additional initiatives (elementary foreign language, career academies, VREP, student exchanges, 1-to-1 computers) that require a great deal of collaboration and ownership-building. While these may all be initiative we need to be examining, we need to show staff how they fit into the big picture will support our efforts to improve student achievement for all students. Again, this is part of a shared vision. Building administrators and teachers have shared concerns that you are not demonstrating support of the PLC work, and that it is not a priority for you. (Administrator)
- * I'm uncertain if you have a say in this but I've heard other para's say that they are not given the opportunity for insurance and benefits because of the way the hours are allocated in their contract. It doesn't affect me but I can see how it may affect others, especially those who are single and making ends meet with just this job (which I believe would be hard to do because it's not highly paid). I didn't really like the small X-mas break. Haha. (Support Staff)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * NA (Teacher)

Any other feedback you would like to provide?

- * You have been an amazing asset to this District! You bring energy, spunk, humor, new ideas, positive motivation and a contagious drive. You are the exactly the leader God called you to be and should be proud. (Support Staff)
- * NA (Teacher)

- * I understand you are in love with bi-lingual education. You have to at least realize that other countries are learning ENGLISH as their second language. That's how they are bi-lingual. Sure it sounds good and looks good on paper that kids know another language, and I also understand that Spanish is on the rise in our country, but at the end of the day this is America. You can make whatever "dumb, ignorant American" comments you want, but if I am planning a trip to Spain or Mexico, then I am going to brush up on my Spanish. If I'm going to Russia, I'll make sure I know the language. Same with China. That's because I'm intelligent enough to realize that I'm not going to visit or live some place where I don't know the language. You want to present it as an option, okay, but forcing the faculty to learn or sit in on it against their will, like it was presented to teachers in elementary schools (see about for overuse of "if you're the type of first rate professionals" slogan), isn't going to help them, it makes you sound like the ignorant American that came in with a plan and failed to let that plan evolve as things changed. For God sakes have a casual Friday. If we have all this talk about being "professional" and in the "business world" then look around at the business world. Nearly all companies locally and nationally have some form of casual Friday. If you're going to keep piling on things, which I'm certain you will, then give a little on something. It's one of those small things that may not mean much to you, but would certainly help your approval rating amongst many of us. There are some schools that throw a buck in and wear them, while other buildings have to pay \$5-\$15 to wear them. Create some continuity and just make it easier. Prior to your hiring there wasn't a dress policy, and then it went from the teachers discretion to no discretion. We don't live in a world of polar ends; we live in a world of compromise. I understand all of these things people suggest can't possibly be done, but this one makes too much sense not to do it, unless you're simply exercising your power rather than trusting that a bit of good morale could benefit the staff. Lastly, there are good people and teachers in this district. Many of those were excited by the prospects of worthwhile change to occur with your hiring. Those same people are watching the wrong things change and the piling on of things that make those teachers want to stop doing their jobs for the right reasons. I went into teaching because I had a great teacher who inspired me, and over my time as a teacher I've been able to influence several students in the same way. I want to continue doing that, but all of the balls in the air that are trying to be juggled are becoming too numerous. Here's a thought of the day for you, "when you focus on doing a lot of trivial things only somewhat decent you end up somewhat decent. When you focus on doing several crucial things really well, then all things fall in line because you put your energy towards the worthwhile things and not the trivial." (Teacher)
- * Enjoy meeting you in the hall, your friendliness, very open, willing to stop and listen or ask how we are doing, Very refreshing. (Support Staff)
- * Anything you can do to make all of us bond closer together as a district or even at the building level. As support staff, many of us are looked down upon by certified staff. We're not important if we don't have a teaching certificate, even though MANY of us have degrees in other fields, but choose to devote our time to kids! (Support Staff)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * Thank you for all you do. You seem to have a limitless supply of energy! I'm glad you are here! (Teacher)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * Please don't change the person you are. You are a rare find. To be in such power, but still hold compassion (Teacher)
- * I admire your devotion to your Christian faith and beliefs. It is a concern of mind though that as a district we seem to have forgotten CFCSD is a multi-cultural, multi-faith school district. I sometimes wonder if this push to make our Christian faith more visible in the district is fueled by some of our larger Christian churches. I don't think you/they should stop sharing just invite or leave the room for others to share.
- * Tough time to be planning new high school, supportive of remodel. Net books were not good elementary purchase. Encourage appropriate support to learn new technology. Some things just put in room for us to "figure out." (Teacher)
- * Thank you for your positive energy and leadership in the Cedar Falls Community School District! It is a huge blessing and distinctly different from the leadership at the high school, I am sad to report. (Teacher)
- * I love all of your ideas. My fear is we are doing so many new things. Do you see value in doing one thing – very well – and then tackle the next issue? Are we going to run out of money? I am concerned that small class size needs to be a priority and it may not be. I know it's difficult with our growing enrollment, but it is an issue. Thank you! (Teacher)

- * I have enjoyed getting to know you, and admire the way you are willing to take things on and get things done. You are a person that leads by example, and you willing to roll up your sleeves and the work with people. You are fair and up-front with administrators, teachers, and all staff. You make everyone feel valued and appreciated. (Administrator)
- * Take the time to understand the district at a high level (seek first to understand). Develop strong relationships with your team; begin with district office and administrative council. Focus on the things that matter most – as a shared vision. Put the PLC process on the front burner. Use the administrative council for decision-making purposes and feedback. There is a lot of experience and perspective in the council that is underutilized. (Administrator)
- * I hope you continue to lead our district in the way you have this year. You have realistic visions for our future too. When looking at languages, will be looking at multiple languages in lower levels? Spanish is great, but I worry about losing others if Spanish is the only option in lower grades. Just food for thought, as I love the idea of languages at younger ages. (Teacher)
- * I wish that administrators would realize that is somewhat of a burden to be on the leadership team. It is extra time we have to plan for readings and subs when we meet during the school day. I wish there was compensation for this. It would also help if these teams had revolving members. (Teacher)
- * Enjoy your energy and feel supported. Slow down a bit. (Teacher)
- * I think lots of good changes are happening with good speed; like the commitment to technology and foreign language as well as Core. (Teacher)
- * Haven't seen you in our building much ☹️ (Teacher)
- * NA (Support Staff)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * Your energy is obvious and appreciated. Some of the old guard will try to discourage you and push for you to slow down. Don't let them. That's one of the reasons we're in the situation we're in. To thy own self be true! If anyone decided they're not going to like you it might as well be for being who you are. Someone who gets things done. Thanks!
- * Thank you for meeting with various schools – hope this form of communication continues. (Teacher)
- * This district has needed you for a very long time. I'm glad you're here! (Teacher)
- * Thanks for the work you do! I hope your first year is progressing as you had hoped. (Teacher)
- * NA (Support Staff)
- * Thank you for all you're doing for our community. Change is difficult for some, but it needs to happen to keep pushing us forward. (Administrator)
- * Not feedback, but a few questions I would like you to consider: 1). Has our school ever considered, "job sharing?" It would help a lot of younger moms out who have to decide between leaving teaching all together so they can raise a family. I have heard of a few teachers who would really like this option. 2). Why does our school not offer AFLAC? I really think you guys need to strongly consider it! I know of several districts around our area including Waterloo who offer it to their staff. I don't understand why a district our size wouldn't offer such a great option for their employees. Not only do moms who have to take maternity leave, but they also have great hospital plans and cancer policies. So it wouldn't just help teachers who have to take maternity leave, but it could probably benefit the majority of employees! It's not like teachers make a ton on money so having the option of AFLAC would help several employees when they do need to take time off from work. Wes Todd is the CF contact for AFLAC. (Teacher)
- * You were my first pick as the new superintendent and still are! (Support Staff)
- * I give you an A⁺. Thanks for all you do. You are a great leader! (Support Staff)
- * So far so good.☺️ (Support Staff)
- * Please keep your enthusiasm and will for the Cedar Falls CSD and all their employees as you are very much appreciated.
- * Welcome to Cedar Falls! (Teacher)
- * I would like to have a professional development or snow make-up day on MLK. The students are more likely to be engaged in January than later in the year. It would be nice to dismiss 1-2 hours early the last day of school. If we go to school the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, it would be nice to get out early for secondary. (Teacher)

- * Visit with the administrators about their and your priorities and vision. Use the administrative team more in the initial stages for input and processing. You have strong administrators to help and support. Don't be afraid to use them. Keep the PLC process as a priority. (Administrator)
- * Thank you for alerting us so early about snow days and late starts. At the High School Early Bird starts at 7:12 a.m. and some of the secretaries start at 7:00 a.m. It's nice to know about delays and cancellations before you are headed out the door. Thanks! (Support Staff)
- * I enjoy your early decisions regarding school delays and closings. As a parent and an employee – it is nice. (Support Staff)
- * Hope you will continue to be involved in all aspects of our schools – coming to small groups, etc. Know how badly we need a new high school, how to make it happen. (Support Staff)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * We seem to be taking on a lot of new things at once since you've come. 1) World language, 2) technology, 3) new high school, and 4) potential new elementary. Why does secondary always drive our district decisions? Research drives so much of what we do unless it's inconvenient for secondary. When serving on district-level committees it always seems like decisions have already been made despite what teachers say they'd prefer. What's the point in being on a committee when your voice is never heard anyway? The district tends to purchase technology that staff doesn't fully understand how to use due to lack of training. Adding 15 minutes to the school day next year is too long for students, especially, when elementary students won't even dismiss until 3:45. Too long. Much too long. It is my understanding that adding 15 minutes each day so secondary can add daily intervention time. This is extremely unfair considering elementary has already implemented this intervention time and has for at least the last couple years. Once again – secondary drives every decision we make. Why can't we add 15 minutes to secondary and not elementary? (Teacher)
- * While I have only met you twice, I am not sure I like you as an administrator. Maybe as a person, but not as someone I trust the future of my job or my child's education to. If you would slow down and not try to be the savior of Cedar Falls Schools in two easy years or less, I might change my mind. Your enthusiasm is contagious, your impulsiveness if frightening. (Support Staff)
- * I appreciate your initiatives with the district and I appreciate your updates. Thanks for all you do!! (Teacher)
- * I am very excited to see what is going to happen in our district. I think your goals are excellent, and I think that we are going to be a world-class district. (Teacher)
- * Is there a way for staff to evaluate building principals? I have never been asked for feedback and would appreciate the opportunity. We can all learn and grow! Also, is there a way to pay support staff more? (Support Staff)
- * NA (Support Staff)
- * You have been in my room more than any other superintendent has and it really means a lot to me. I feel you think your decisions through and take all those who will be impacted into consideration as well. Thanks for all you do! (Teacher)
- * I'm glad we have you here in our district, and I look forward to the coming years! (Teacher)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * There are too many inconsistencies. I understand buildings should have autonomy but some things need to be consistent and enforced. Planning time should be equal. There should not be buildings where teachers are allowed to bring their children to school during contract hours. Teachers' children are in our building starting at 8:00 a.m. until 4:15 p.m. These children hear confidential conversations and take time away from the teachers. Also, there are teachers who have their children at school during PLC time on Wednesday's. There are secretaries who have children/grandchildren in the office, hearing things and seeing things. These are just inconsistencies in policies that I think need to be addressed. There are too many liabilities and privacy issues not being addressed. (Teacher)
- * Please keep in mind that although we do like the idea of foreign language, we don't want it to take precedent over other budget priorities, such as class size. The same thing for buildings, there is such a priority for a new high school rather than looking at the needs of all buildings. Orchard Hill and North Cedar are the only buildings with no definite dates for SIGNIFICANT improvement. PLC's have to be a priority for student learning. Research shows this. (Administrator)
- * NA (Teacher)
- * I really like the staff updates – very informative. Thank you for your hard work. (Teacher)

- * I have been an elementary teacher for 12 years. Nine of those years have been in Cedar Falls Schools and I have been proud to be a part of this school system. During this time, I have seen Cedar Falls Schools slowly begin to change their emphasis from tradition to excellence. This has been a change needed for some time and it is quite exciting. I believe we are heading in the right direction as we have begun looking at the common core, having rich discussions based around data within collaborative teams, and are looking to align our curriculum/assessments/conference reports. I fully support all of the work we are doing. However, with all of the changes in the past two years, many teachers feel that the cart has come before the horse. We are working harder rather than smarter. Often times having to redo work once a decision has been thought through. Having worked as an instructional coach, I understand the need to continue to push the district/teachers forward, but the current rate in which decisions and changes are taking place does not quite make sense and has become overwhelming for teachers. This is a new process for everyone and mistakes will understandably be made, but more forethought and feedback from teachers may help from continually redoing work and acknowledgement when mistakes have been made will help to recognize teacher concerns. We are struggling to keep up. I have seen the most passionate, positive, and dedicated teachers become beyond burned out and incredibly frustrated. As part of the PLC process, we are asked to look at data and make decisions based on this data. Is this process being modeled at the district level as well? What kind of data is being collected at the district level to help make decisions on the next steps and how or is it being used? Being a part of the BLT team, I know many teachers who have gone to their principals and have shared concerns with Pam Zeigler and Christine Mangrich, only to feel as if our pleas have fallen on deaf ears. We have been told to "go with the flow" and turn to our collaborative teams for answers. However, we are asking the questions because our teams do not know the answers. We are working the front lines with parents and students and because we feel so strongly about what we do, we want to do what is right. For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to be a teacher. In fact, I never even considered being anything else. I believe in what I do and have never questioned all of the time I invest in my job. However, for the first time, I find myself asking if it is worth it. It is with a heavy heart that I am considering resigning at the end of the year. To do what... I do not know. Please help us to not only move the district and our students in the right direction, but also make it manageable for teachers as well. Please help us to narrow our focus and think through decisions thoroughly before implementing new policies and procedures. (Teacher)
- * I can't admit to "not liking" anything you have done, but I do have thoughts concerning this question. During my administrative courses, this comment from professors seemed to become embedded in my thoughts...and I wrote it in my planner! "During your first year of administration, whether it be as an associate principal, principal, or a member of the central administration, treat it as a year of listening, watching, meeting, assessing and learning. You need to listen, watch, meet, assess and learn about your new community, district, co-workers and employees, before you can make plans to change structure, curriculum, initiatives and the general flow of things". Now... that is a very broad statement and probably a bit far-fetched as there could be expectations or needed interventions that are stated prior to employment. At the first of this school year, the new or reconstructed high school, bi-lingual education, the Chinese exchange, the question of technology and BYOD, all seemed to be a bit overwhelming to most of our people, who were just getting acquainted with PLC, AIW, IPI and how it all fits together. (Administrator)
- * Personally, I have felt "out of the loop" on a number of things that are happening. You have had meetings with parents, business leaders, community members, and staff involving issues or areas that are directly related to my work or responsibilities, yet I have not been included. Whether it be Career Academies or student exchanges or complaints, if I am to be part of the solution, I hope you will involve me in the process. At times, Cabinet and Admin. Council has felt that our opinion is not relative or considered. An example would be your written directive to Cabinet that you need and expect our support for bilingual education. While I believe that this program would be a great enhancement to our educational program, I believe we have not developed a K-12 vision of where we want this program to lead us, and that we have not fully developed a curriculum plan for each level (Elem, JH, HS). Yet we are still planning to implement the program at the elementary level next fall. (Administrator)
- * I have enjoyed having you as my superintendent. I have seen positive changes from last year. (Support Staff)
- * "The lotus is the most beautiful flower, whose petals open one by one. But it will only grow in the mud. In order to grow and gain wisdom, first you must have the mud - - the obstacles of life and its suffering. The mud speaks of the common ground that humans share, no matter what our stations in life. Whether we have

it all or we have nothing, we are all faced with the same obstacles: sadness, loss, illness, dying, and death. If we are to strive as human beings to gain more wisdom, more kindness and more compassion, we must have the intention to grow as a lotus and open each petal one by one." Goldie Hawn – Thanks for helping me open a few petals. (Teacher and friend)

* NA (Teacher)



Carrie DeBerg <carrie.deberg@cfschools.org>

Staff Feedback

1 message

Mike Wells <mike.wells@cfschools.org>

Thu, Feb 21, 2013 at 6:21 AM

To: Dave Williams <dave.williams@cfschools.org>, Deon Senchina <deon.senchina@cfu.net>, Jenny Leeper <jleeper@cfu.net>, Jim Brown <jim.brown@cfschools.org>, Jim Kenyon <james.kenyon@cfschools.org>, Joyce Coil <joyce.coil@cfschools.org>, Susan Lantz <susan.lantz@cfschools.org>, Dave Williams <williams@cfu.net>, Jim Brown <jimbrown@cfu.net>, Jim Kenyon <gocatsgo@cfu.net>, Carrie DeBerg <Carrie.DeBerg@cfschools.org>

Last month, I sent all staff members a reflection survey to get their feedback on my performance as a superintendent. I wanted to share these with you. I compiled them, word for word, and did not leave out any comments. If you have any questions let me know. Thanks.

Mike

**Staff Feedback on my performance.doc**

97K

"My Reflections on the Superintendent"

What have I done that you like? (Continue to do)

- * Thought of the day and continual communication. You are personable and care about us as individuals. You show that each of us is a viable asset. Visionary, think outside the box, willing to speak your mind, dedicated, and hilarious! (Support Staff)
- * I appreciate your willingness to share what is going on within the district through your email updates. Please continue to communicate with the paraeducators within the district. Many of the paraeducators within our building have mentioned that you are the first superintendent to share information with them. As a parent and teacher I appreciate when you let families know as early as possible in regards to delayed starts and closed school days due to inclement weather. You have made it easier for families to prepare ahead of time in these types of events. Continue to allow the staff within the district to share their thoughts and ideas with you. The 2013-2014 calendar looks wonderful. (Teacher)
- * I like that you are actively trying to be more involved than our prior superintendent. Although it's unrealistic to be in all the classrooms like you said at the start of the year, the fact that you are at least trying to be more visible is a step in the right direction. Continue seeking feedback. Assuming you use this as intended, to get a pulse of the staff in our district, and not as a purely political document where it looks like you care, but are merely trying to put up a front that you do, then this is positive. Obviously not everything can be done all at once, but neither can all things that you're trying to do either. (Teacher)
- * Like the open communication, weekly updates, etc., very approachable! (Support Staff)
- * The daily email contacts and updates! Love that you are in the building! It shows you care! Most of all the "blessings" you subtly attach to notes! God bless you and your work that you are doing for us! (Support Staff)
- * I really appreciate all of the new ideas you have brought to the district. It's great to see the school district moving in new directions! I also appreciate (as small as it seems) that you decide on late starts and cancellations the day before when possible. I have heard from numerous parents that this is so helpful in making the necessary arrangements for their children if they will not be in school. Students safety is absolutely always number one, but this is the first time in my 20 years of teaching that a superintendent has shown concern for employee's safety as well. Your sincere caring interest in the entire school district is wonderful! (Teacher)
- * I like your positive, proactive, transparent leadership. Thank you for inviting us to be part of the process towards becoming a "world class" district. I read and appreciate your thoughts of the day. I love how you are visible in our building - our kids know who you are! Thank you for your positive advocacy. (Teacher)
- * Great communication and visibility! You make conscious efforts to communicate with staff via "Thoughts of the Day" emails, email messages about weather delays/cancellations, "Staff Updates", site visits, etc. You are personable, easy to be around, and very non-threatening. I am so pleased to have our leader be a Christian, and it's refreshing to hear and/or read something from you including "God", "pray", blessings, etc. You are positive and progressive! (Teacher)
- * I absolutely love your character as a person. You are easy to talk to, fun, funny, outgoing, and just an all around good human being to be around. The first time I met you, you were setting up in our cafeteria for a meeting and I was just leaving school. It was about 5:30 and you were giving me a hard time for staying so late. You genuinely care. For instance: sending us safety tips, telling our entire staff (secretaries included) to drive in only when it was safe on our late starts even if it may take away from part of our work day. That makes me want to work hard for you. I love how you call snow days/late starts so families can make arrangements. I love how you want us to be involved and take new ideas to our students even if it means sending us to a conference where we would miss a day of school. The second time I met you was when you were walking through the media center with Dawn and you looked at me and said, "What kind of computer would you want, PC or Mac"? It's not too often someone of higher power really cares what the little guys want. The last time I have gotten to see you other than just passing in our building was at Toads, just a week or so ago. You bought us all a beverage. Who does that? You do that. You send us these little thoughts all the time and although I admittedly don't read them all every day, I can just feel how you are through them. I know we are a public school and there is some constraint on what we can and cannot say,

but there are times you remind me of my faith and it sheds hope and joy on time ahead. I don't know you a ton professionally, but as a human you are one the greatest guys I have met in your position. (Teacher)

- * Keep on smiling, it's genuine. I like your open-mindedness, keep it up. Thank you for listening (Teacher)
- * Visit to buildings for feedback, communication about weather-related decisions, approachable, caring, personable, asks for feedback, and communication through emails; can do once a week instead of daily if helpful. (Teacher)
- * I love the level and quality of your communication with the staff district-wide. It is greatly appreciated and valued! (Teacher)
- * Open, honest, and consistent communication (i.e. Taylor Morris, snow dismissals). Very visible at sporting events, and community events. Very friendly and approachable. Meetings at individual buildings. You seem to really listen, thank you. (Teacher)
- * You have brought a lot of energy and direction to Cedar Falls. We have a vision of where we want to go with growing enrollment and the potential of a new high school in particular. This is a big challenge, and you are spearheading the movements. We continue to have time for PLC work, and that is still a point of emphasis. Teachers have time for PLC work in Tuesdays/Wednesdays and during PD days. You are visible, and have a real pulse of the district. It is clear that you are working to improve the district as a whole looking at technology, bilingual education, schedule of the day changes, using data to make decisions, etc. (Administrator)
- * Aggressive plans for things that need to change, willing to tackle tough times. Willing to push forward and think outside the box. Appear to make positive connections with community members and UNI. Superintendent's Update – communication with district staff. (Administrator)
- * Very personable and ease to talk to. Excellent communicator. Seeing you in the buildings, supporting students outside the classroom in various activities. Participating in meetings, such as DTC and technology. (Teacher)
- * I really appreciate how you are at extracurricular events, like even helping out in the concession stand. I really appreciate how you don't seem to be afraid of making big decisions not everyone will like, like building a new high school. (Teacher)
- * Attempting to move the district forward. (Teacher)
- * Daily reflections, monthly/weekly updates, and asking input from staff. (Teacher)
- * Good communication on issues and you provide explanations, even for those decisions that are unpopular. Progressive thinker, thinking of more than what is cheaper/easier but more "Is it good for kids?" (Teacher)
- * I have not had any personal interaction with you, but when I have seen you, you are very friendly and seem to have a very deep concern for everyone. You care about people! I appreciate that. I can also tell that God is your guide, and I also appreciate that. You are a good leader and you don't think that you are better than anyone else because of your position. (Support Staff)
- * Worked on a new high school plan and continuing to further standards and trimester tests at elementary. (Teacher)
- * I love that we are starting to see some action on things. Right or wrong, let's talk about it and make a decision. Our Board has been sitting on their hands too long on many things. The new school is a perfect example. If you step back and take a look at the big picture and the future there's no doubt what needs to happen. Putting more money into this old, undersized, inadequate facility is ridiculous. If we do a good job of educating the public on what the future looks like we should be able to get this done. But, the Board has to step up and declare this is the thing to do. It's not what Mike Wells wants, it is what the Board wants and recommends. Keep helping them see the light!
- * The letter (via email) communicating happenings and opportunities in the district and the school meetings to discuss concerns and changes. (Teacher)
- * I was so impressed what you took the time to come around to the schools and classrooms within the first couple of weeks of school. I also like your "Thoughts of the Day". More people need to take time to think about what's really important. Your reminders help me. Your positive attitude is palpable when you walk into a room. I appreciate that! (Teacher)
- * You keep us in the loop from snow cancellations to rational for decisions you have made. It is nice to not have mystery behind decisions made. I would appreciate continued transparency and updates as you /we move forward as a district. (Teacher)
- * Love the communication and Thoughts of the Day! Keep being approachable! Thank you! (Support Staff)

- * You are moving the district forward, which is much needed and appreciated by many. Your willingness to visit classrooms and visit with teachers and parents has been highly valued. Thank you for listening to staff and valuing their input. (Administrator)
- * Building meeting where we were able to share concerns/needs. Very personable and seem easy to talk to. I like that you attend CF sporting events and are very involved with the district as a whole. Moving forward with a new high school. Bringing up the issues of technology and looking at the idea of a "world class school". (Teacher)
- * I find that you have a very personable manner. You are very friendly and outgoing which I believe is important as a leader. I am grateful that you are not ashamed to let people know you are a Christian and stand on solid values. Thanks for keeping us abreast of changes that affect us here in the district. (Support Staff)
- * I like the Thought for the Day. The reflections are truly inspirational! (Support Staff)
- * I enjoy your daily words of wisdom. I also appreciate your updates on the district activities. I have heard you are a visitor in the schools often and staff like that. You are very accessible to employees. (Support Staff)
- * Your lines of communication to all groups. As an employee it is nice to know what is going on with the rest of the district outside of my realm. The attention to detail personally and professionally that you display is so appreciated. As an employee I have felt appreciated by you and it makes me attain that same attitude towards my coworkers. This can only lead to success for the students. The enthusiasm and optimism that you show is very encouraging and contagious. It also makes you very approachable and that again is appreciated. I am encouraged that everyone is treated with respect and without favoritism by you. And most and foremost your goals and opportunities for the student you have are very evident and get better. It reaches all grades and levels of need for the students and they are very fortunate to have you. You give the will of we can achieve this goal and you go after it. You have shown you do not just say your goals; you try very hard to achieve them. In speaking with coworkers, I have heard very positive comments about you. I am a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa and very proud of that school, as I am of CFCSD. I have always been of the opinion that we are very fortunate to have our school so close to UNI and we need to take advantage of what the college can offer in classes and partnerships for the students and employees. I was real encouraged when you acted on these opportunities right away and are working on establishing a good relationship with UNI.
- * I like that you visit the schools often and that you stop in the classrooms. You talk to the students and teachers. This is a big plus! Staff updates have given us information that we have never gotten before. You explain reasons for what you do. (Teacher)
- * I like having the Friday off before spring break. Good plan to have the secondary get semester tests over before holiday break in December. I like having our year end in May with the option of extra days (in case of snow) at the end of May so we still get out before or around June 1. (Teacher)
- * Looking at the future, technology, wanting the best. High school building planning. Positive interpersonal skills, you have a positive outlook on people and schools. Meetings with elementary and secondary staff and discussing "World Class Schools". (Administrator)
- * I like the communication you have with the staff. I like that you visit the schools during the day and attend so many events. (Support Staff)
- * The everyday communication via email makes us all feel like you care about all of us. (Support Staff)
- * Thought for the Day is great, never enough time to think through it. Know by your language that you are a Christian and I feel that is very important. (Support Staff)
- * Good level of communication with email updates. Prompt reply to questions. Making weather-related decisions early. Good community/school activity involvement. Honest response when working to solve problems (bus incident for example). Approachable and open to discussion. I appreciate your comments about the importance of family. I appreciate your comments about Christ and Christmas. Do not hide your faith, live it out. When people feel their family is valued and feel as though they are part of a work family they work harder and happier. Keep the faith and stay connected. (Teacher)
- * I appreciate your communication, (i.e. school delays/closings, your explanation of the importance that we remain in school to honor Taylor Morris, Staff Update, etc.) As a staff member, it makes me feel respected to know you communicate with us. You are easy to seek clarification from regarding issues our district is facing/dealing with. I don't feel hesitant to ask questions of you if/when I have them. I've noticed that you end email messages with, "Blessings" or even "God Bless". I appreciate it and thank you for that! (Teacher)